

I thought he should carry in stock. As I got through with each item he said:

"Well—enter that for an order."

When I finished I had one of those orders which the manager himself would feel proud to land.

Such an order is a mighty nice thing; but of no value if the man is not responsible, if he has no financial standing. I rushed over to the little hotel barroom, and asked the bartender, who was also proprietor, if he knew this Macdonald who was building the store, knew what he was worth.

"He's got a farm all his own that's worth twenty thousand dollars, and he has over fifty thousand dollars in the bank," was the reply.

That was the best piece of news I could learn. After awhile I was introduced to two Set farmers, one of whom was the Sheriff, and accepted their invitation to ride the nine miles to the railway station with them.

After the three of us had climbed into the one seat of the heavy express wagon the driver told me that there was a corpse in the back of the wagon underneath the covering. The brother of the man he had worked for had died, and he was taking the remains to the boss's old homestead. From this the talk of the Sheriff and the driver drifted to many dismal tales about funeral trains, mourning cries, and wailings that they had heard; then tales of haunted houses, etc. All the stories of ghosts that they had ever known seemed to come crowding upon their recollections, and along with this a drowsy, dreamy influence seemed to pervade the very atmosphere. We had traveled several miles down the road, and it was beginning to get dark. The men continued their tales of strange sights and doleful happenings, until I suggested that we change the subject. They at once agreed.

"We'll start a change of subjects with a sip of this old Scotch," said the driver as he pulled a flask from his pocket.

We all took a sip out of the bottle; then the driver, turning round until he faced the corpse, said:

"Will you have a sip, old man?"

"I don't mind if I do," came a reply, as the figure rose to a sitting position.

In the scramble out of the wagon my coat caught on the wagon box. The two others disappeared down the road. Oh, the horrors of that moment! I was scarcely able to breathe. By the time I had worked myself

I realized that the supposed corpse was none other than the man that had given me at beautiful order. When I asked him what all this meant he told me that when we were in the hotel he had taken the corpse out of the wagon and got in himself for a joke. It was easy to see that the man was mentally unbalanced. Then the thoughts of all the time I spent on that order and that it amounted to nothing staggered me so that I could hardly resist giving the fellow a good trouncing.

I made the man sit on the seat, and then drove to the next farmhouse. When I arrived I found the driver and the Sheriff. The latter immediately handcuffed the man, and told me that when I reached town I could collect the reward of one hundred dollars that was offered for the capture. The man had escaped from an insane institution six months before. He burned several buildings in the county and always managed to evade arrest.

The next day when I saw the real Macdonald I found that another man had received the order. Well—the reward soon dissipated my disappointment.

#### Winner of \$20 Prize

#### MY A. B. DEGREE

By Edwin A. Pitt of Baltimore

MY chief called me in and informed me that the firm was bidding on the electrical illumination of the A. B. Tower Building.

This company intended to make a grand electrical display at a proposed municipal convention, and wanted to outline the entire architectural features of the building by electricity. The grand feature, however, was to be a revolving cupola on the tower, and the plan was to surmount the crown with a powerful searchlight, and by means of long rows of incandescent lamps outline the twenty-foot letters of the company's name which had been applied in gilt on the vertical sides of the revolving cylinder.

I had charge of the electric installation of this building at the time of its construction, and knew that what was proposed would be anything but easy to execute. That competition among the local companies would be keen I already knew; but our firm wanted this contract, and so

it was up to me to get it.

I could see from the plans and specifications for this work that the only place where we could hope to underbid the other companies was in the illumination of the revolving tower. But to get access to the tower letters, so that they could be wired, was apparently only by means of an enormous scaffold rigged up from the base of the projecting ledge of the parapet. To do this would require the entire stock of a lumber yard, not considering the cost of putting it together and removing it afterward. This alone would cost twice as much as the actual wiring work itself, and after making a careful estimate I found the cost to be fifteen hundred dollars for the tower part alone, which left no margin for profit. I knew that we could never expect to get the contract at such a figure.

But what was I to do? As usual, I blamed my limited education for my apparent inability. I thought that with a college education and the degree of engineer I could have solved this problem easily. Just as I was about to give up I remembered how the head of our firm had once told me that ingenuity and commonsense were worth all the diplomas in the world.

This gave me new energy. I immediately began to scheme, devise, revise, and rescheme, and two hours later when I looked up from my desk I wore the smile that won't wipe off.

I lost no time in putting our proposal into proper shape, and at the appointed hour sent it to the offices of the A. B. Company.

The following morning I arrived at our office early. I had just begun a verbal report to my chief of the progress of our work in Philadelphia when he was called to the telephone. A few minutes later he returned with a look of consternation on his features.

"What sort of blunder did you make in that estimate of yours?" he demanded. "The A. B. Company tells me that the contract has been awarded to us, and that our price of twenty-five hundred dollars is lower than the six others, which ran from thirty-five hundred to forty-five hundred. We'll be the laughing stock of the entire electrical trade."

"Yes, probably now; but wait until this job is done," I then told him what I proposed to do.

We lost no time in beginning our work on the building, and after several days were ready to start the wiring of the tower.

As I was leaving the office for an inspection of our work I met one of our competitors, who sarcastically asked me when we expected to start wiring the tower.

"This morning," I replied, "and if you have time, come along and see the fun."

"But," he said, "I passed there last evening, and there was no timber or scaffolding in sight, except a length of six by six that was being unloaded."

"That's my scaffold," I said; but before he had chance to reply we turned a corner and were in full sight of the tower, gleaming in the morning sun. And away up there, three hundred feet above us, my friend's astonished eyes saw that piece of six by six stuck through the stationary crown of the cupola, the one end extending three feet beyond the vertical sides, with a stout piece of rope attached to it by means of a block, and suspended from it a chair arrangement in which sat one of our men calmly wiring one of those big letters. And as he was still gazing upward he heard the faint sound of a signal bell, and the next instant the cylinder under the crown slowly revolved until the next letter came in front of our man. Another bell, and the cylinder stopped. The wiring on the second letter had begun.

"You deserve the job," was all my competitor said as he left me.

The day the final payment for the work was made the head of our firm called me into his private office, and after commanding me for my ingenuity asked whether I had ever gone to college. I told him that I hadn't been that fortunate, to which he replied that I certainly had not lost anything by it, and that if he was a college professor he would recommend me for the degree of A. B. I said I didn't quite understand him. He explained that this particular degree

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